

Message Text

SECRET

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S E C R E T BANGKOK 7560

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MARR, TH

SUBJ: REDUCTION OF US FORCES IN THAILAND

REF: BANGKOK 7476

1. FOREIGN MINISTER CHATCHAI CHUNHAWAN TODAY MENTIONED TO NEWS-MEN THAT THERE QTE MIGHT BE A COMMUNIQUE ON US WITHDRAWALS SOMETIME THIS WEEK UNQTE. FOLLOWING PUBLIC STATEMENT PROPOSED FOR RELEASE BY RTG TO BE FOLLOWED BY RELEASE AT DOD PRESS BRIEFING. REQUEST SPEEDY REVIEW OF PROPOSED STATEMENT TO ALLOW JOINT RELEASE ASAP. WE WILL ADVISE WHEN RTG HAS MADE RELEASE HERE.

2. QTE CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN OFFICIALS OF THE ROYAL THAI GOVERNMENT AND THE US GOVERNMENT HAVE RESULTED IN A JOINT AGREEMENT TO CONTINUE THE REDUCTIONS BEGUN LAST YEAR OF US FORCE LEVELS IN THAILAND. BY THIS UMMER ABOUT 7,500 US MILITARY MANPOWER SPACES WILL BE DELETED FROM THE CURRENT LEVEL OF 27,000 AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL. DETAILS OF THIS REDUCTION WILL BE WORKED OUT IN FURTHER TALKS THAT WILL DETERMINE THE SPECIFIC FORCES TO BE DELTED AND THE TIMING OF THEIR DEPARTURE. FOLLOWING A JOINT AGREEMENT OF THE TWO GOVERNMENTS ANNOUNCED MARCH 29, 1974 US MILITARY FORCES HERE WERE REDUCED LAST YEAR BY 10,000 IN A SERIES OF REDUCTIONS THAT CLOSED THE US FACILITY AT

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TAKHLI RTAFB AND ENDED US TACTICAL AIR OPERATIONS AT UBON

RTAFB, WHERE ABOUT 350 US PERSONNEL REMAIN AS A CARETAKER UNIT UNQTE.

3. WITH COVERING LETTER FROM CDA, COPY OF STATEMENT IS GOING TO FOREIGN MINISTER WITH CAVEAT THAT WE ARE AWAITING WASHINGTON APPROVAL OF THE ANNOUNCEMENT. GIVEN FOREIGN MINISTER'S TRACK RECORD WITH THE PRESS, INCLUDING HIS MENTION TODAY TO NEWS-
MENT OF THE APRIL 25 DISCUSSIONS, IT IS CLEARLY POSSIBLE THAT CHATCHAI WILL TALK TO PRESS ABOUT SUBSTANCE OF FORTHCOMING REDUCTIONS WITHOUT REGARD TO TIMING OR WORDING OF PROPOSED JOINT ANNOUNCEMENT. HOWEVER, WITH SPEEDY APPROVAL OF STATEMENT ABOVE, WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO HOLD CHATCHAI TO COMMENTS WITHIN SUBSTANCE OF STATEMENT.

4. FOLLOWING Q'S AND A'S WERE NOT RPT NOT CONVEYED TO FOREIGN MINISTER. THEY WILL BE USED TO GUIDE US SPOKESMEN HERE IN DEALING WITH ANTICIPATED QUESTIONS FROM NEWSMEN FOLLOWING PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT. WE URGE US SPOKESMEN ELSEWHERE TO FOLLOW SUBSTANCE OF Q'S AND A'S IN RESPONDING TO PRESS QUERIES ABOUT THIS MATTER.

5. Q1: HOW MANY US MILITARY PERSONNEL ARE IN THAILAND?

A1: AS OF JANUARY 1, THERE WERE ABOUT 25,000 US MILITARY PERSONNEL IN COUNTRY.

Q2: DOES THIS ANNOUNCEMENT MEAN THAT 7,500 PERSONNEL WILL BE LEAVING?

A2: US MILITARY UNITS ARE NOT USUALLY MANNED AT 100 PERCENT OF THEIR AUTHORIZED LEVEL. THE ANNOUNCEMENT TODAY ENVISIONS THE REDUCTION OF ABOUT 7,500 MANPOWER SPACES FROM THE CURRENT LEVEL OF 27,000, LEAVING ABOUT 19,500 SPACES. THE ACTUAL NUMBER OF PERSONNEL REMAINING IN THAILAND AFTER THIS REDUCTION WILL PROBABLY BE SOMEWHAT LESS THAN THIS.

Q3: TWICH Bases WILL BE AFFECTED BY THIS REDUCTION?

A3: THESE DETAILS HAVEN'T YET BEEN WORKED OUT. THEY WILL BE ANNOUNCED WHEN THEY ARE WORKED OUT.

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Q4: IS THIS THE BEGINNING OF TOTAL US MILITARY WITHDRAWAL FROM THAILAND AS ANNOUNCED PREVIOUSLY BY THE RTG'S POLICY STATEMENT?

A4: THIS IS A CONTINUATION OF THE DECREASES THAT OCCURRED DURING 1974.

Q5: WHEN WILL THESE REDUCTIONS BE ACHIEVED THIS SUMMER?

A5: WE HAVE NO EXACT DATE. THAT WILL BE WORKED OUT ALONG WITH THE DETAILS OF THE REDUCTIONS.

Q6: WHO WILL WORK OUT THESE DETAILS AND WHEN?

A6: THEY WILL BE WORKED OUT IN CONTINUING CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN OFFICIALS OF THE RTG AND USG. AS THEY ARE WORKED OUT, THE DETAILS WILL BE ANNOUNCED.

Q7: ARE ANY PLANES LEAVING? IF SO, HOW MANY?

A7: THAT WILL BE WORKED OUT ALONG WITH OTHER DETAILS OF THE REDUCTIONS.

Q8: DOES THIS MEAN THAT CERTAIN HEADQUARTERS IN THAILAND WILL BE ELIMINATED?

A8: AS WE HAVE SAID, THE DETAILS OF THE SPECIFIC MANPOWER SPACES AND THE UNITS TO BE AFFECTED HAVE NOT YET BEEN WORKED OUT. AS THOSE DETAILS ARE WORKED OUT, THEY WILL BE ANNOUNCED. MASTERS

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NNN

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